

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-20 NSC-10 SPC-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 PM-07

AGR-20 EB-11 IO-14 NEA-10 DRC-01 /153 W

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R 021030Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5120

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

USNATO 1385

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, MT

SUBJ: PRIME MINISTER'S NEW YEAR ADDRESS

REF: VALLETTA 2422

1. IN EVENING RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCAST DEC 31, P.M. MINTOFF GAVE HALF HOUR ADDRESS TO NATION. ONLY SURPRISING FEATURE WAS LACK OF INVECTIVE AGAINST THE BRITISH WHICH CHARACTERIZED SUCH SPEECHES IN THE 1971 AND 1972 CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY SEASONS.

2. SPEAKING IN MODERATE TONES, MINTOFF OUTLINED THE ECONOMIC SUCCESSES OF 1973: INCREASED TOURISM AND EXPORTS, RELATIVELY SLOW RISE IN COST OF LIVING, ESTABLISHMENT AIR MALTA AND SEA MALTA, AFFORESTATION, INCREASED UTILIZATION OF ARABLE LAND, FEWER STRIKES THAN MOST OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, MALTA'S RELATIVE FREEDOM FROM ENERGY PROBLEMS, AND IMPROVED SITUATION AT DRYDOCKS. HE ANNOUNCED THE PAYMENT OF UNPAID PRIOR PAY INCREASES FOR CIVIL SERVANTS, BUT WARNED THAT ONE SHOULD NOT ASK FOR THINGS GOM CANNOT AFFORD. IT DID
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NOT INTRODUCE SUCH THINGS AS PAYMENT OF ARREARS, AND

FORTY HOUR WEEK UNTIL IT WAS SURE IT WOULD AFFORD TO DO SO. HE ALSO WARNED THE PIONEER CORPS NOT TO PRESSURE GOM, WHICH WOULD DO ITS BEST TO FIND THEM EMPLOYMENT IN INDUSTRY. HE MAINTAINED THAT GOM COULD NOT AFFORD TO HAVE MORE THAN 20,000 CIVIL SERVANTS.

3. MINTOFF DEVOTED SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF HIS ADDRESS TO NATIONAL BANK DIFFICULTIES, MAINTAINING THAT THERE ARE "MILLIONS IN LIQUIDITY FOR EMERGENCIES," BUT GOM CANNOT PROVIDE ITS FULLEST SUPPORT UNTIL A GENERAL MEETING OF BANK SHAREHOLDES IS HELD AND DECISION MADE TO HAND OVER THEIR SHARES TO GOM WITHOUT COMPENSATION.

4. ON FOREIGN POLICY, MINTOFF SIMPLY STRESSED NEED FOR MALTA TO MAINTAIN FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH MEDITER-RANEAN COUNTRIES, AND NOTED THAT WHAT HAPPENS IN EUROPE AND AFRICA AND INDEED THE WORLD AFFECTS MALTA. HE EXPRESSED SOME CONCERN ABOUT MIDDLE EAST IF GENEVA PEACE TALKS FAIL.

5. COMMENT: TONE AND CONTENT OF MINTOFF'S S*ATEMENT END TO SUPPORT CONCLUSIONS IN OUR MOST RECENT ASSESS-MENT OF POLITICAL SITUATION (REFTEL) THAT MINTOFF'S CURRENT GOOD MOOD PROBABLY REFLEC S HIS BELIEF THAT THINGS ARE BEGI NING TO BREAK FOR HIM, AND THAT HIS FINANCIAL POSITION IS SUCH THAT HE CAN UNDERTAKE SOME POPULAR "BELT-LOOSENING" MEASURES.TUCKER

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